Azica
MIRAŽ
SHANNON LEE | VIOLIN
ARSENIY GUSEV | PIANO

WITRAŻ

STATEMENT ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In 1642, Oliver Cromwell's soldiers destroyed the stained-glass windows of the medieval Winchester Cathedral in southern England. Shattered images on the glass, destroyed with vehemence and ignorance, were nearly impossible to restore. However, together, the townspeople found a solution – picking up the little pieces and arranging them in a different order, preserving a sorrowful reminder of forever-vanished beauty.

When we were selecting the pieces for this album, Witraż (Stained-Glass Window, from Polish), we were driven by the idea to reflect that very complicated psychological and aesthetical tension that was formed in Eastern Europe between the two world wars. Older values, beliefs, and ways of life were smashed and shattered, just like the windows of the Winchester Cathedral, and composers of that time were left with the task of collecting those shards and reconstructing a forever-changed musical reality.

Now, when the Russian invasion of Ukraine has broken the fates of millions of people in Europe, it seems especially important to us to bring together musical images created by Eastern European composers during the Interbellum period. Centered around Bartók's First Sonata for violin and piano and Stravinsky's Duo Concertante, this album also includes shorter works by Szymanowski, Lyatoshynsky (transcribed by Arseniy), Martinů, and Bacewicz. From ancient Greek influences to impressionist techniques and neoclassicism, there are many imaginative threads and memories to follow, and perhaps the architecture of this album can provoke thoughts and impressions similar to those one might experience upon observing the poignant mosaics of the Winchester Cathedral.

Stained Glass Window Photos by Michael Strong

SPECIAL THANKS

This CD would have been absolutely impossible without the generous support, encouragement, and inspiration of JW Wilson, our dear friend. We are endlessly grateful to him and his wonderful family. We also would like to thank those who helped with preparations along the way: Avaloch Farm Music Institute, Shawna and Tibor Klopfer, Christian and Elaine Wolf, Glen Kwok, Eugene Brand and Judson Manor; our teachers Jaime Laredo, Jan Mark Sloman, Sergei Babayan, and Vera Beths; and our families for their caring support and architectural role in our creative paths.

Photo by Olivia Crumm

VIOLINIST SHANNON LEE has been praised for her “remarkable fire, impeccable intonation, and big, vibrant tone” (Gramophone). She has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Tokyo Symphony, Antwerp Symphony, Belgian National Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, and New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Currently based in Amsterdam, Shannon is active as a soloist and chamber musician across multiple continents. In 2023 the Fontec label in Japan released a CD of Shannon’s dynamic recital program with pianist Jessica Osborne, with works by composers including Bartók, Takemitsu, and Brahms. As a chamber musician, she has played at Creative Dialogue France, Krzyżowa-Music in Poland, Music@Menlo in California, Yale University’s Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and Heifetz International Music Institute, where she was Artist-in-Residence and teaching assistant.

Photo by Terence Pang

In addition to teaching privately, Shannon is the founder and director of Chamber Music Perspectives Workshop, a one-week summer exploration of both chamber music and composition for advanced young string players in the Dallas-Fort-Worth area.

Born in Canada, Shannon began playing the violin at age four in Plano, Texas. She made her solo debut at the age of twelve with the Dallas Symphony, and two years later performed in Germany with the Nuremberg Philharmonic. That year she made her debut recording for Telarc International, “Introducing Shannon Lee,” featuring 19th and 20th century works with pianist Pamela Mia Paul. Since 2018 Shannon has won top prizes in several international events, such as the Queen Elisabeth, Sendai Music, Shanghai Isaac Stern, Indianapolis Violin, and Naumburg Foundation competitions.

Shannon’s mentors and major influences have included Jan Mark Sloman, David Nadien, Jaime Laredo, Ida Kavafian, Arnold Steinhardt, and Vera Beths. After completing her Bachelor’s degree in computer science from Columbia University, she studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, Cleveland Institute, and Conservatorium van Amsterdam, where she also explored interests in baroque violin and composition.

shannonleeviolin.com

Photo by Justin Aranha

Pianist and composer Arseniy Gusev was born in St. Petersburg in 1998 and has been studying music since age five. In 2015, he went to the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. In 2017, he graduated with honors from the Specialized Music School of the St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory and afterward studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory itself. In 2018, he moved to the US, in 2022, received his bachelor's degree (as a pianist and composer) from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and in 2024, received his master's degree in composition at Yale University. Since 2024, he has been pursuing a master's degree in piano at the Juilliard School. Sergei Babayan, Keith Fitch, Chris Theofanidis, and David Lang are among his teachers.

Photo by Chris Lee

He actively performs in the US and abroad, and has given solo concerts in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Slovakia, Russia, and Germany. His compositions are performed in Mariinsky Theater, Carnegie Hall, Konzerthaus Dortmund, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony Hall, and other major venues. He collaborated with such conductors as Arkady Steinluht, Dmitry Vasiliev, Robert Carter Austin, Alexander Titov, Ilya Derbilov, Mikhail Golikov, and Mikhail Mosenkov, and performed together with such musicians as Jaime Laredo, Sharon Robinson, Olga Kaler, and Anthony Roth Costanzo. Arseniy participated in master classes of Garrick Ohlsson, Samuel Adler, Andrew Norman, Joan Tower, Dmitry Bashkirov, Grigory Gruzman, Jerome Rose, Alexander Mndoyants, Nina Lelchuk, and others.

Arseniy is a laureate of many prestigious competitions, such as the Dorothy McKenzie Artist Award, Cleveland Piano Virtu(al)oso Competition, Singapore International Piano Competition, Three Arts Piano Competition, Cleveland Composers Guild Contest, “Another Space” Composition Competition, International Gavrilin Competition, International Competition “Performer-Composer”, and others.

“Newburyport Current” described his playing as “a blend of superb technical proficiency and lyrical romanticism seldom found in equal measure, especially in one so young.” “Petersburg Gazette” outlined Arseniy’s music as “melodic and cantabile”, “continuing the traditions of Russian school”.

As of 2024, two solo piano albums by Arseniy were published: “Enfleurage” (Etymology Classics, 2023), and “Musical Offering” (Steinway&Sons, 2024).

Arseniy has an exclusive contract with “Kompozitor” publisher house. Among recently published works are 24 Postludes (2018) and 3 Toccatas (2020).

arseniygusev.com

WITRAŻ

SHANNON LEE | VIOLIN ARSENIY GUSEV | PIANO

Karol Szymanowski: Mythes (1915)
1. La fontaine d'Arethuse

Béla Bartók: Sonata No. 1, Sz. 75 (1922)
2. Allegro appassionato
3. Adagio
4. Allegro

Boris Lyatoshynsky, arranged by Arseniy Gusev: Reflections, op. 16 (1925)
5. Come di lontananza

Bohuslav Martinů: Impromptu, H.116 (1927)
6. Poco allegro
7. Andante moderato
8. Allegretto moderato

Grażyna Bacewicz:
9. Kołysanka (Cradle Song) (1952)
10. Witraż (Stained-Glass Window) (1932)

Igor Stravinsky: Duo Concertante (1932)
11. Cantilene
12. Eglogue I
13. Eglogue II
14. Gigue
15. Dithyrambe

CREDITS
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